

to present papers and did not appear at the meeting to do so. They should take thought to themselves in this matter and remember that such conduct may seem but a trivial matter to themselves, but that possibly it may upset the whole value of a symposium or may disappoint many who perhaps have come to the meeting to hear the particular paper in question. A good and sufficient excuse should be made by them to the chairman of the program committee, and an apology is certainly in order. Furthermore, the program committee should consider the advisability of excluding such members from place in future programs.

The exhibition of the Pure Food Commission was a revelation of the enormous amount of work done by the Commission and attracted the attention of everyone present. The Commission is entitled to the thanks of the entire Society for the manner in which it has inaugurated this most important work and the great progress it has made during the past year. As will be seen from the minutes, the name of the commission has been changed to the public health committee, of five members, which committee will carry on the work so well begun. Copies of public health bills and ordinances, national, state and municipal, from all parts of the country, have been laboriously gathered together and were on exhibition. The milk and water supplies were treated by photographs in large number showing clean and unclean plants. Nor had food adulteration or improper preservation been forgotten and the edifying spectacle was presented of a lunch table, every article on which was either adulterated, sophisticated, or preserved by some injurious ingredient. The plan for continuing the work is through a committee whose members shall serve five years, thus preserving the integrity of the personnel of the committee, and securing the co-operation of the county organizations by means of auxiliary members or sub-committees in the various counties. Every possible aid and co-operation should be given to this most important movement and to the members of the committee who have performed their task with such remarkable success.

#### THE NEW OFFICERS.

As provided by the constitution, the election of officers was taken up by the house of delegates as the first order of business at the second session, Wednesday, April 22d. San Jose and Del Monte were nominated for the next annual meeting, and the former place chosen by a large vote. Dr. King, of Los Angeles, then nominated Dr. W. W. Beckett, of Los Angeles, for president; the nomination was seconded by Dr. F. Dudley Tait, of San Francisco, and as there were no other nominations, the secretary was instructed to cast the ballot of the House of Delegates for Dr. Beckett for president for the ensuing year. The other officers were elected in

the same manner and are as follows: First vice-president, Dr. Fred. Baker, San Diego; second vice-president, Dr. E. G. McConnell, San Francisco; secretary, Dr. Philip Mills Jones, San Francisco; all the retiring councillors were elected to succeed themselves, as follows: Drs. Ewer, Oakland; Osborne, Santa Clara; Mays, Sausalito; Grosse, San Francisco, and Pottenger, Los Angeles. The full minutes will be found elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL and from them the various elected committees can be ascertained.

With each passing year the American Medical Association grows, not alone in numbers nor in the circulation of its *Journal*, but in influence upon the history of medicine. The meeting this year is of unusual importance for several reasons. It is to be held in Chicago, the city of the official home of the Association and where its material possessions are located, and also the Association has not met there for many years—over a quarter of a century, if memory serves. The regular sessions will be held from June 2nd to June 5th and of course will not fall behind the standard of excellence which has been set for them in past years. In addition to these official sessions, however, we understand that a series of clinics is being arranged which will last for several weeks after the regular meeting and which will be of the greatest value to those who can avail themselves of the opportunity of thus taking a short postgraduate course. This scheme of postgraduate work fits in so well with the modern idea of medical organization for improvement and for the benefit of the public health, that one must wonder that it has only so recently been undertaken by county societies; it is certainly most fortunate that something of the same idea is to be placed before the members of the Association at the coming meeting. Every one of us who can possibly do so should attend this meeting of the A. M. A.—and in fact every meeting—and we should not allow some trifling thing to keep us away. Remember the place—Chicago—and the time—June 2nd-5th.

It is an ancient practice, when one is having the worst of a discussion or argument, to construct some fictional statement, allege that the other fellow has put it forth and then attack this visionary thing which has been created for that very purpose as though it really was a vital issue. That is what has been termed putting up and fighting "straw men." These few words are called forth by some of the absurd attacks which have recently been made upon the council on pharmacy and chemistry of the A. M. A. Sundry of the independent (?) medical (?) journals of the country have howled and wailed because the council is not composed of physicians, has few or no physicians on it, and is

#### THE A. M. A.

#### STRAW MEN.

not giving out therapeutic advice; they claim that the council can not do its work unless it is made up of doctors or has a number of them within it. But just stop a moment and think about it; think first of its title; it is a Council on *Pharmacy and Chemistry*—mark you, *not* therapeutics. It had its origin in a more or less general demand to know the actual *composition* of remedies and the truth as to the statements made by the interested manufacturers in foisting them upon the medical profession. In other words, the council is not intended for a therapeutic-advice shop, but it *is* a truth foundry. Physicians are not practical chemists nor are they acquainted with the refinements of pharmacy. In order to determine the truth about any remedial preparation, pharmacists and chemists must examine it and investigate its properties and then say what it is and whether the truth about it is being told to the medical profession. As a result of the work of the council, we now know that there is not a single pharmaceutical manufacturing house in the United States—mark you, *not one*, that has told the absolute truth about all of its preparations. Any one who has even casually followed the exposures published in the *Journal A. M. A.*, will recognize the truth of this statement at once. It is most unfortunate that it should be so, but so it is and it was to put a stop to just that sort of thing that the council was formed. No physician can tell, unaided, whether the manufacturer is telling the truth about his stuff or not; he has not the time nor the knowledge to make chemical examinations himself, nor the money to have some chemist make them. Therefore observe the foolishness of this “straw man” and be not deceived.

In a recent issue of the *Bulletin* of the American Pharmaceutical Association (an organization of scientific men—mostly—for scientific purposes, and not to be confounded with the National Association of Retail Druggists which exists, apparently, for the purpose of aiding the proprietary association and its members in promoting nostrums and “patent medicines”), is an item which demands some consideration. We quote:

“The charge is made that no one can establish a prescription business in that city (San Francisco) without paying commission to the doctors, that these ghouls even collect commission from nurses and morticians.”

The officers of the A. Ph. A. are men of the highest standing in the country, including such men as W. M. Searby, of San Francisco; Oscar Oldberg, of Chicago; Henry H. Rusby, of New York, and others of equal standing. Now, Messrs. Searby, Rusby, et al., do you not think it quite fitting that you apologize to the medical profession, not alone of San Francisco but of the entire country, for referring to them as “ghouls”? Whatever their faults, they are members of a learned profession which

gives more of its time, its brains and its work to charitably succoring the sick poor than do all the other professions combined. Are they “ghouls”? That, too frequently, alas! a commission is paid to certain physicians on their prescriptions, is true. But who started the game? Who taught the physicians to take it? Who competed for the prescription business of all the physicians who could be so bought? Who had drummers, local, city agents whose business it was to go to physicians and offer them commissions and endeavor to persuade them to take the filthy money? Who bid, the one against another, each offering somewhat more of this dirty money, to secure certain physicians’ business? Messrs. Searby, Rusby, et al., it was *the pharmacists who started the game* and who have seduced and are still trying to seduce physicians into taking this rotten gain. But not all are bad; there are many men in this city of San Francisco who have been approached by representatives of *your* calling over and over again to do this very thing, but in whom there is too much honor and too much honesty to listen to the unhallowed proposition made to them first by one and then by another pharmacist. And yet we are “ghouls,” forsooth! All of us, without exception, are without saving grace! As for the two other charges, referring to nurses and “morticians” (*sic*), they are nothing but lies, except in so far as there may be an occasional rascal who would blackmail anyone, if he got a chance; and you find them in all callings, even in politics we have been told, and doubtless amongst the pure-as-the-driven-snow pharmacists might be found some who have grown fat by encouraging the cocaine habit. Really, gentlemen, officers of the American Pharmaceutical Association, don’t you think you had better offer some apology to the medical profession, or do you, after due consideration, now that the matter has been called to your attention, still consider yourselves justified in designating physicians as “ghouls”?

Some few county society secretaries are sending to the JOURNAL very full and good reports of their

meetings, the papers read and the discussions thereon; but a good many are not.

#### SOCIETY REPORTS.

What is the matter? It has been found by experience that these reports are of great interest, not alone to the members of the particular society, but to many general readers and to other societies. New ideas or experiences, new thoughts, new points of view, new suggestions, reports of interesting cases are constantly being made in the county society meetings and these things are things of value; they should not be buried in one county society. Will not the secretaries of county societies give this matter their attention and take sufficient time, immediately after each meeting, to send a transcript of the interesting points brought out to the JOURNAL for publication? It will not take a great deal of time or work, and please, Mr. Secretary, remember that that is one of the things you were elected for.